METHODS OF TESTING APPLICANTS FOR ENTRY INTO STENOGRAPHIC POSITIONS

Lois W. Eldridge

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THESIS

METHODS OF TESTING APPLICANTS FOR ENTRY INTO STENOGRAPHIC POSITIONS

SUBMITTED BY

LOIS W. ELDRIDGE

A.B. MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE, 1939

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1948

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

This study has for its purpose 3 major objectives:

1. To determine pre-employment testing procedures in Municipal Boston.

2. To present the need for standardization of testing procedures.

3. To make available all possible data on which to base recommendations for the future co-operation of business and schools in pre-employment testing.

In order that there may be complete uniformity as to certain terms used, specific definitions will be given at this time. These definitions will hold throughout the content of this study.

Municipal Boston

The capital city of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, situated at the head of Massachusetts Bay.[1]

Clerical Aptitude Test

A test of capacity or ability to do such work as checking sums, filing, accounting, typewriting, and taking dictation in shorthand.[2]

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[1]Polk, R. L., Boston City Directory. Boston, Massachusetts, 1946. p. 13.

[2]Good, Carter V., Dictionary of Education. New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1945. p. 415.

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General Intelligence Test

A nonspecific term designating a composite test made up of parts that have been found empirically to correlate well with some practical indirect measure of intellectual ability, such as success in school.[1]

Pre-employment Test

A test designed for the purpose of predicting a person's probable success in a given type of employment; frequently used to select the most promising of a number of applicants for employment.[2]

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Today, schools are called upon to train students for entrance into a highly competitive and extremely active business world. It is their duty to see that the quality of the work done by the students meets the standards set up by business.

This study is concerned with the methods of testing applicants for entry into stenographic positions with respect to effecting a closer integration of business and the schools that they may co-operate in developing an effective testing program for the benefit of the students seeking initial employment. The area to be investigated is Municipal Boston, Massachusetts.

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[1] Good, op. cit., p. 416

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[1] Good, op. cit., p. 419

[2] Ibid., p. 419

Testing is by no means the sole medium of selecting personnel for a stenographic position. The employer may use to his advantage a combination of three suggested methods of selection. These methods are: (1) application blanks; (2) employment tests; and (3) the interview. Of these procedures, tests serve a very definite purpose in the culling of personnel in that they act as clinical instruments helping the interviewer to judge the applicants' qualifications and thus exclude any who lack the minimum qualifications for success.[1]

In the Tenth Yearbook of the Eastern Commercial Teachers Association, a report was made of a survey of employers' attitudes toward tests as a means of selecting employees. The following reactions were recorded:[2]

General Approval:

1. Employment tests give the interviewer a better basis on which to form an opinion concerning the applicant.

2. They work as a filter eliminating those among the applicants who are not adapted to clerical work.

3. They simplify the selection procedure.

4. An important by-product advantage is that they provide an opportunity to observe the applicant at work and not infrequently induce him to talk more freely than at the interview.

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5. They help to meet the requirement of more careful selection imposed upon the employment department by the increasing standards of efficiency set up by top management.

6. They aid in the recognition of persons of outstanding ability and eliminate the suave personality that "talks" into recognition.

7. They are economical, for by their use it is possible to secure an estimate of the applicant's ability and job fitness which could be ascertained otherwise only by more costly study and observation over a long training period.

8. By comparison the personnel selected by tests in the past few years is markedly improved.

Opposition to Tests:

1. The development of tests of adequate validity and reliability is a tedious and almost endless procedure, requiring the attention of a psychologist or one specially trained in the technique.

2. They require, too, special skill in their administration and interpretation.

3. They are too costly.

4. The same results can be secured by shrewd and capable interviewing.

5. They are of value only when there is a surplus of applicants. When there are only a few applying for employment and the need for them is great, those applying must be hired even though they may be subpar.

6. They are best suited to the employer of large groups of office workers, and are not for the small fellow.

7. They do not measure many qualities that are of primary importance to success on the job such as loyalty, honesty, fairness, and similar intangibles.

8. Many applicants are nervous and apprehensive in their eagerness to gain employment. Under such circumstances their scores under test may be so

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poor as to work against their selection.

As far as can be determined, no formal survey of pre-employment testing procedures for office personnel has been made up to the present time in the Municipal Boston area. This study seeks to determine the present status of pre-employment testing in Boston as revealed through the following:

1. What types of tests are administered - intelligence, clerical aptitude, or performance?

2. What is the length of the dictation tests administered and how much time is the applicant allowed to transcribe them?

3. At what rates of speed are the transcription tests dictated and how is the dictation timed?

4. What provision is made for the orientation of the applicant to the dictator's voice and to the typewriter?

5. How are the results of the tests interpreted or graded?

A review of the literature on pre-employment testing methods discloses an evident need for a definite clarification among businessmen and educators as to the careful selection and use of tests. Tests must be practical or they lose their effectiveness. The selection of tests is of the utmost importance and requires the greatest care and experience.

One personnel director writes:[1]

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> No innovation in industry or commerce has been subjected to greater ridicule nor has met more resistance than the science of testing. The principal impediments to the general acceptance and use of tests as valuable instruments of management were (1) the manner in which they were initially introduced, and (2) over-reliance on and improper use of tests on the part of management . . . Thus crude and useless tests were offered and sold to unknowing management at ridiculously high fees . . . Gradually, however, the accomplishments of tests partially overcame the prejudice created by their introduction and further trials were given. However, new obstacles were encountered which, to a large extent, are still prevalent today.

In 1937, the president of the Eastern Commercial Teachers Association set forth in his opening address several suggestions for dealing adequately with the preparation of pupils for gainful employment for which they are best fitted. Two of his suggestions have a direct bearing on this problem.[2]

> . . . There is the need for establishing definite standards of vocational ability for initial employment. These standards must be based on actual job performance on the beginner's level and must be determined in connection with each duty inherent in the job.
>
> . . . There is the need for measuring attainment of vocational ability. Reliable tests and other means of measurement must be devised for ascertaining how closely the vocational abilities of each pupil approximate employment standards. Uniform procedures must be adopted for administering the tests and evaluating the results.

The statement of another personnel director also reveals a lack of uniformity in present pre-employment testing practices.

---

[2]Muldoon, Edward J., op. cit., p. XViii.

He writes:[1]

> Psychological tests have become almost a standard part of selection procedure. Some companies use tests which are published by psychological organizations. Others have developed their own tests to fit their own needs. Occasionally the testing program is industry-wide . . .

Still another writer criticizes both schools and employers for their selection of tests which fail to measure the productive ability of applicants and students and thus cause placement difficulties.[2]

> School tests given at the conclusion of the training, for the most part, fail to measure the ability of graduates to enter upon and perform the duties of office positions for which they ostensibly have been trained. Tests given by employers do little better in the way of measuring immediate productive ability of those whom they hire. This lack of reasonable accuracy in measuring abilities of prospective workers is one cause of excessive turnover in office employment. These faulty tests tend to cause graduates of our schools no end of trouble in making satisfactory occupational adjustments at the outset in their business careers.
>
> Thus it seems reasonably clear that a testing plan is needed by employers of office help; that schools need more satisfactory media for measuring the results of teaching the vocational skills and supporting background subjects; that some incentive must be found for giving more attention to essential prerequisites of vocational business training.

It is apparent that present pre-employment testing practices need be standardized. The only way to effect this standardization of testing methods is through co-operation

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[1]Jackman, J. R., "Prevocational Training vs. Initial Employment Requirements." Personnel November, 1938.

[2]Page, Carl H., op. cit., pp. 41-2.

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of business and schools. Much has been written on the need for closer contact between these two agencies. This topic of co-operation was selected as the theme of discussion in the 1944 edition of the American Business Outlook Yearbook in response to a definitely felt need in the field of business education.

In this yearbook the National Educational Chairman and Director of the National Office Managers Association wrote an article stressing the necessity to close the gap between education and business. He said:[1]

> Never before - at least during the present generation - has it been so apparent that the qualifications of the high school graduates and elementary business requirements are so far apart. The tremendous demand for clerical help caused by World War II has forcibly demonstrated this fact. Industry has been compelled to inaugurate all sorts of clerical training programs and refresher courses in an effort to find sufficient office help in order to operate. This condition has become a definite handicap and, as a matter of fact, has actually damaged the war effort to a degree beyond normal understanding . . .

In another article in the yearbook, an employment manager suggests that the best means of closer relationship between business men and educators is through personal contact to discuss their problems regularly and periodically. He sets forth several approaches for joint endeavor:[2]

> A very effective basis for co-operative action is personal acquaintance. The better people in the

---

[1]Hansen, William H., "N. O. M. A. Views Business Education." Community Co-operation in Business Education. The American Business Education Yearbook, Vol. I. 1944. p. 12.

[2]Ibid., p. 186

two fields know each other the more they will be able to accomplish. It is therefore strongly urged that personal contacts be developed wherever possible.

Formal action by groups of educators or by business groups will open the way for effective group action as well as for valuable personal contacts. In most communities, an initial session of educators and business people in equal numbers will point the way.

Associations of business education teachers, through committees, can arrange meetings at a business office and can observe, firsthand, work requirements, standards, working conditions and other interesting points about actual jobs. Through such meetings teachers and work supervisors can exchange information and ideas.

Placement activities represent the culmination of the school training program, but they cannot function successfully without planned co-operation between schools and business. Schools must be acquainted with the classification of jobs offered and with the requirements concerning skills needed in the performance of the duties connected with all types of employment. Contacts with business are therefore essential to keep the school informed about the kind of skill training which they should have to make them acceptable when applying for a job. A close co-operation with business can be regarded as a type of insurance which protects the school against criticism by employers that students are not properly trained to meet the initial requirements of business. If students are to acquire the special qualifications set for them in different fields of employment, teachers should have all the guidance possible in developing the skills and knowledges required.

One writer suggests that a careful examination be made of various employment tests that teachers may know what features of these tests should be incorporated in the training in the school program.[1] The testing program should make provision for testing the student in his understanding of the different types of examinations likely to be met upon taking employment.

This writer continues:[2]

> Perhaps the finest example of co-operation between business men and business educators is found in the experience of the National Office Management Association. This group of progressive business leaders working through a national committee consisting of both school people and office managers has developed the National Clerical Ability Tests which have done much to focus the attention of office managers on what they really require for different types of office employees. These tests have given school people a clearer understanding of the "end results" that should be secured in different types of office training programs. In nearly every section of the country the local chapter of NOMA has been most helpful in working with the schools. In addition to direct suggestions and recommendations, such co-operation has given office men a much better understanding of school procedure and problems and, in turn, it has given school people a better insight into office needs and requirements. It is pointed out that this program represents a small but a very worthwhile start. Much more needs to be done. As a means of furthering the program in each school, it is suggested that at least one teacher in the business department be a member of the local chapter of NOMA.

---

[1]Armstrong, Evan J., Cowan, Harold E., Tyler, Susette Beale, Zelliot, Ernest A., op. cit., p. 272.

[2]Ibid., p. 274.

It is apparent that this is a definite step in the right direction for effecting a closer integration of business and schools that they may co-operate in a testing program for the benefit of the employers who will hire them.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF THE FIELD

There has been very little significant research in pre-employment testing procedures. There is much that can be done. Pre-employment testing procedures present an open field for continued research.

The only significant research study that relates to pre-employment testing methods was undertaken by a Joint Committee of the National Office Management Association and the Eastern Commercial Teachers Association commencing in the spring of 1935 and extending to the spring of 1937.

Previous to this major survey, no exhaustive study of the adoption by employers of pre-employment testing practices had been made.

The only attempt at making such an investigation is described as follows:[1]

> Perhaps the nearest approach to such a broad inquiry is that of the National Industrial Conference Board, published in March 1936. This, like most similar analyses, is an examination of all the personnel practices and techniques included in company personnel programs. Since, then, the use of employment tests is only one of many items examined, the information lacks both exactness and completeness.
>
> Of 2,452 companies, employing 4,502,608 persons, only 141 (5.8%) used employment tests in the selection of clerical workers. In the manufacturing

---

[1] Joint Committee Report, Present School Practices in Vocational Ability Testing. Tenth Yearbook, Eastern Commercial Teachers Association, 1937. pp. 58-59.

group, the three leaders were Agricultural Implements with 15% of the companies using tests for clerical workers; Electrical Manufacturing with 12.2%; and Printing and Publishing with 9.3%. The non-manufacturing group was generally higher in the use of tests, its leaders being Insurance companies (48.7%), Public Utilities (25.0%), and Retail, Mercantile and Wholesale establishments (19.7%). Further, there is a definite direct relation between the size of the company as measured by the number of employees on the payroll and the use of employment tests. Only .4% of the companies with less than 100 employees used tests, whereas 28.8% of the companies with more than 10,000 employees adopted their use.

Even though in the aggregate the proportion of companies using employment tests is small, it is encouraging to note that in so-called "clerical" industries, i.e., those in which the bulk of employees are engaged in clerical work, and in large companies the practical value of testing applicants is recognized, for it is logical to assume that the clerical selection problem in these cases is most acute.

Two other smaller surveys are described as follows:[1]

A somewhat more optimistic picture is presented in two additional, smaller surveys . . .

In 1935 the National Office Management Association made a survey of the personnel practices of 254 companies employing an aggregate of 202,922 office employees. Of these companies 140 (55%) indicated that selection tests were used as the basis of employment, 114 (45%) that they were not used. Of the companies using tests, 10 used them exclusively in selection, and 130, to a limited extent.

During the same year, the Office Management Association of Chicago conducted a survey of 107 companies which showed that 66 (62%) did not and 41 (38%) did use intelligence or trade tests. Of the latter group 26 used trade tests only; 14, intelligence and trade tests; and 1, intelligence tests only.

Regardless of the lack of agreement in the findings of these three surveys on how widely employment

---

[1]Joint Committee Report, op. cit., p. 59.

> tests have been adopted, all point definitely to the conclusion that there is still a great opportunity for promoting wider recognition of the merits of selecting by test. Moreover, such general surveys are incomplete in that neither the nature of the tests nor the kinds of work tested are reported in detail.

This major survey, in which testing practices were investigated in both schools and business, was undertaken so that a national program of vocational tests might be established. The purposes of these tests are set forth as follows:[2]

> 1. To provide an authoritative device, somewhat comparable to the college board examinations, for use in measuring the qualifications of public and private business school graduates for some of the more common office occupations for which vocational training is given.
>
> 2. To assist business teachers and others who are responsible for vocational business training programs in attempting to bring their course offerings and testing procedures somewhat more into line with sound principles and practices in the field of vocational education.
>
> 3. To assist educators in their attempts to insure for vocational business courses students who possess the aptitudes, interests, and abilities required for the kinds of work for which they seek pre-employment training.
>
> 4. To provide employers of office help with a better means of appraising the qualifications of applicants for clerical positions, and to provide a certification plan which will, to some extent, obviate the necessity of giving employment tests to applicants who have graduated from public and private business schools.
>
> 5. To bring office managers and other employers

---

[2]Editors, "Purposes of National Clerical Ability Tests," Journal of Business Education 14:28. November, 1938.

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3. To assist educators in their attempts to locate for vocational business courses students who possess the aptitudes, interests, and abilities required for the kinds of work for which they seek pre-employment training.

4. To provide employers of office help with a better means of appraising the qualifications of applicants for clerical positions, and to provide a certification plan which will, to some extent, obviate the necessity of giving employment tests to applicants who have graduated from public and private business schools.

5. To bring office managers and other employers

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[2] Editors, "Purposes of National Clerical Ability Tests," Journal of Business Education 14:26. November, 1938.

of clerical help into a closer working relationship with business educators in public and private schools.

To develop the so-called "National Clerical Ability Tests," two surveys were made, one of measuring vocational abilities in the schools, the other, covering tests used for specific office occupations.

The school investigation was conducted as follows:[1]

> Schools in all of the states were canvassed, but usable replies received reduced the number of states included in the study to 34. In each of these 34 states from one to five schools (or cities with several schools in some cases) are included. No attempt was made to limit the study to either the large or the small high school . . . It is believed that the 75 schools reporting represent a reasonably good cross-section of schools from the standpoint of their final testing practice.

The findings of the survey are summarized as follows:[2]

> 1. Final examinations in advanced shorthand are being discontinued in many schools;
>
> 2. Where final examinations are given there is far too much dependence upon dictation speed and accuracy of transcript for determining vocational competency;
>
> 3. Too much state-contest and publishing-company material, designed for diagnostic uses, is being used for final testing purposes;
>
> 4. Very little effort to formulate better and more comprehensive tests of stenographic ability is apparent in the replies received in this inquiry.

To determine testing practices among employers, a questionnaire was distributed to 140 members of the National

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[1] Joint Committee Report, op. cit., p. 16.

[2] Ibid., p. 25.

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To determine testing practices among employers, a questionnaire was distributed to 140 members of the National

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[1]Joint Committee Report, op. cit., p. 16.

[2]Ibid., p. 26.

Office Management Association.[1] This questionnaire covered tests used for the specific office occupations of bookkeeper, calculating machine operator, dictating machine operator, file clerk, stenographer and typist.

The results of the survey were as follows:[2]

> Forty-seven replies were received. Of this number twenty-seven reported the use of tests on some or all of the selected occupations; twenty reported the use of no tests. The slimness of the sample and its definite bias in favor of tests reduce its significance as an indicator of the testing practices generally followed in commerce and industry.
>
> Of the twenty-seven companies reporting the use of tests, twelve utilized specific ability or trade tests only.
>
> All of the remaining companies used a general aptitude test for two or more of the selected occupations. Two depend upon this type of measure alone; three use supplementary specific ability or trade tests combined with a measure of related capacities which make for success on the job; and ten combine the general aptitude with trade tests.
>
> Stenographers are subjected to tests for the discovery of their knowledge of sentence structure, ability to follow directions, breadth of vocabulary, and alertness in the use of words; tests for punctuation, spelling and vocabulary.

The testing program of the Joint Committee included all phases of vocational abilities, but this paper is concerned only with its work on Stenographic Ability Tests. Special research in conjunction with the Stenographic Ability Test covered a period of more than two years.

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[1]Joint Committee Report, op. cit., pp. 59-60

[2]Ibid., pp. 60-61.

A special survey conducted in the New England Area by the Office Management Association is as follows:[1]

> As the first step a survey was made by the President of the New England Office Management Association among the members of this organization to obtain from employers all possible information concerning testing programs in use, and standards deemed desirable . . .
>
> This survey disclosed that most offices have no definite testing program beyond dictating one or two short letters to the applicant to be transcribed immediately.

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[1]Joint Committee Report, op. cit., p. 142

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> This survey disclosed that most offices have no definite testing program beyond dictating one or two short letters to the applicant to be transcribed immediately.

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[1]Joint Committee Report, op. cit., p. 142

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES USED IN THE COLLECTION OF DATA

The following procedure was used in conducting this survey of methods of testing applicants for entry into stenographic positions:

1. The procurement of names of business concerns in which it was believed that some methods of pre-employment testing were used.

2. The preparation of a letter applying for an interview with those concerns using pre-employment testing procedures.

3. The preparation of a questionnaire to be used as a guide in gathering information and data during the interviews with those concerns.

4. The personal interview with personnel managers of each firm as arranged by correspondence.

5. The tabulation and summarization of the data and information gathered.

PROCUREMENT OF NAMES: Assistance was sought from and gladly offered by the personnel director of a private business college in Municipal Boston in the selection of names of business concerns, which, it was believed, gave some sort of pre-employment test to their applicants. The firms were selected at random. The type of business in which these firms engaged was not considered since it was felt that it would have no definite bearing on the testing practices employed in the stenographic departments.

Since a total of 15 firms was the goal sought, 18 names were chosen, thus allowing for possible refusals on the part

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES USED IN THE COLLECTION OF DATA

of the concerns solicited.

PREPARATION OF LETTER: Application for an interview was made by letter, sent to each of the 18 selected concerns. (Form A page 20) The following information was included in this letter:

1. Name of the personnel director of the business college with whom an official of each concern was acquainted. The use of her name was considered the most effective means of gaining an interview.

2. Purpose of the survey.

3. Request for an interview.

4. Enclosure of an addressed postal card for convenience in replying.

PREPARATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE: A questionnaire consisting of 35 items was prepared and submitted for criticism to a guidance director of a Boston business college and to the personnel director of a Boston business firm. The suggestions received were incorporated in the revised form which was used as a guide during the interviews. (Form B pages 22-23)

Simplicity of response was sought in order that the interviews would not be time-consuming. In the trial test before the final revision was made, the questionnaire was satisfactorily completed in 15 minutes.

The questions were so worded as to make a brief reply possible. The following will show the approximate distribution of the various types of response:

FORM A

Dear Sir:

The Personnel Director of Burdett College, Mrs. Lois K. Jones, has given me the name of your firm as one which includes testing as part of its hiring techniques.

In preparation for my Master's thesis at Boston University, I am making a survey of the methods of testing applicants for entry into stenographic positions. The purpose of the survey is to determine the testing practices of a carefully selected group of Boston business firms in order that schools may better prepare their students to meet their standards.

Would you be willing to give me some of your time that I may become acquainted with your testing procedures? May I come for an interview on . . . ?

I am enclosing an addressed postal card for your convenience in replying.

Yours truly,

Lois W. Eldridge

Questions to be answered Yes or No 16
Questions requiring a brief response . . . 15
Questions requiring a test score 4

PERSONAL INTERVIEW: The response to the letters sent out to the personnel manager of each concern requesting an interview was gratifying. Of the 18 firms selected, 15 granted an interview. The 3 remaining were willing to co-operate, but it was felt that their particular testing techniques were not of sufficient importance to be of any value in this thesis.

Although 15 minutes was ample time for the completion of the questionnaire, the length of time for the interviews varied. In 12 interviews 12 to 15 minutes was the average time spent. In the 3 remaining interviews, the time extended from an hour to an hour and a half depending on the interest manifested by the person being interviewed. Two personnel managers revealed an especial interest in this study by requesting a copy of the survey findings.

TABULATION OF DATA: The complete findings of this study are presented in the next chapter. A list of the 15 concerns interviewed is submitted in Appendix A.

FORM B

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are intelligence tests administered in the selection of personnel for stenographic and secretarial positions?
2. What type of I. Q. test is given?
3. How important is the I. Q. in rating the applicant?
4. Do you place a ceiling on the I. Q.?
5. What is the lowest I. Q. accepted?
6. What is considered a desirable I. Q.?
7. Are clerical aptitude tests administered?
8. What type of clerical aptitude test is given?
9. How much weight is placed upon the results of a clerical test?
10. By whom are these intelligence and clerical aptitude tests administered and the test results interpreted?
11. Are norms accompanying tests acceptable, or have office norms been established?
12. To what extent is age considered in the selection of employees?
13. Is preference given to applicants with business college or collegiate backgrounds over those with high school training only?
14. Are typewriting tests administered for applicants for typist positions? By whom?
15. What type of test is given, straight-copy material or office-job material?
16. Is practice at the typewriter permitted before testing?
17. What is the total testing time allotted?
18. Are specific directions given for arrangement of work?

19. How is test graded? By whom?

20. What is the degree of accuracy sought?

21. What speed proficiency is sought?

22. Are dictation tests administered for stenographic and secretarial positions?

23. What type of material is dictated? By whom?

24. Is directed practice offered prior to the testing?

25. Are specific directions given for arrangement of letters?

26. How many letters are dictated and what is their approximate length?

27. Is the material dictated at an even rate of speed, timed by a stopwatch?

28. Has test administrator had special instruction in the timing of dictation tests?

29. Is material dictated office-style?

30. Are repetitions in dictation permitted?

31. How much time is allotted for transcription?

32. How is test graded? By whom?

33. Is verbatim transcription necessary?

34. Are deviations from original dictation permissible, provided basic meaning is retained?

35. Are materials for tests of typist and stenographer supplied by firm?

19. How is test graded? By whom?

20. What is the degree of accuracy sought?

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34. Are deviations from original dictation permissible, provided basic meaning is retained?

35. Are materials for tests of typist and stenographer supplied by firm?

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

In the presentation of the findings regarding methods of testing applicants for entry into stenographic positions, the data are presented according to the arrangement of the questionnaire which served as a guide during the interviews with the personnel managers, office managers, and test administrators.

The first question, "Are intelligence tests administered in the selection of personnel for stenographic and secretarial positions?", brought to light the following information: Of the 15 firms interviewed, 7 or 47% answered Yes, and 8, or 53%, answered No.

TABLE I

Replies to the Question:

Are Intelligence Tests Administered in the Selection of Personnel for Stenographic and Secretarial Positions?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Yes	7	47
No	8	53
Total	15	100

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

In the presentation of the findings regarding methods of testing applicants for entry into stenographic positions, the data are presented according to the arrangement of the questionnaire which served as a guide during the interviews with the personnel managers, office managers, and test administrators.

The first question, "Are intelligence tests administered in the selection of personnel for stenographic and secretarial positions?", brought to light the following information: Of the 16 firms interviewed, 7 or 47% answered Yes, and 9, or 53%, answered No.

TABLE I

Replies to the question:

"Are Intelligence Tests Administered in the Selection of Personnel for Stenographic and Secretarial Positions?"

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Yes	7	47
No	9	53
Total	16	100

In answer to the second question, "What type of I. Q. test is given?", it was discovered that of the 7 concerns administering an I. Q. test, only 2 used the same type, the 5 remaining being different. Two used the Otis Self-Administering Tests of Mental Ability. The others listed in order are: A Company Test, Purdue Placement Test, Benge's Test of General Knowledge, Life Office Management Association Test, and Wonderlic.

TABLE II

Replies to the Question:

What Type of I. Q. Test Is Given?

Name of I. Q. Test	Number Using It	Per cent
Otis Self-Administering Tests of Mental Ability	2	28.5
Company Test	1	14.3
Purdue Placement Test	1	14.3
Benge's Test of General Knowledge	1	14.3
Life Office Management Association Test	1	14.3
Wonderlic	1	14.3
Total	7	100

Table III shows the replies to the question: "How important is the I. Q. in rating the applicant?" It indicates

the relative importance each firm placed upon the results of the particular I. Q. test it was using in the selection of its personnel. It is significant to note that 3 considered the results very important; 3 used them only as a guide; and 1 had not yet determined its importance.

TABLE III

Replies to the Question:

How Important is the I. Q. in Rating the Applicant?

Name of I. Q. Test	Unedited Replies from Interview
Otis Self-Administering Tests of Mental Ability	Very Important
Otis Self-Administering Tests of Mental Ability	Have not decided*
Company Test	Very Important
Purdue Placement Test	Not determining factor. Usually all pass it well.
Benge's Test of General Knowledge	Decisive
Life Office Management Association Test	Serves only as guide
Wonderlic	Serves only as guide

*See Appendix B

In question 4 it was asked: "Do you place a ceiling on the I. Q.?" The replies indicated that 4 did not place a ceiling on the I. Q.; 1 did; 1 did only in rare cases; and 1

had not decided.

TABLE IV

Replies to the Question:

Do You Place a Ceiling on the I. Q.?

Unedited Replies from Interviews	Number of Replies	Per cent
No	4	57.1
Yes	1	14.3
Rarely	1	14.3
Have not decided	1	14.3
Total	7	100

Table V summarizes the replies to questions 5 and 6 which are: "What is a desirable I. Q.? What is the lowest I. Q. accepted?" Only 3 of the 7 concerns replying had any specific scores to present in answer to these questions:

TABLE V

Replies to the Questions:

What Is a Desirable I. Q.? What Is the Lowest I. Q. Accepted?

Name of I. Q. Test	Lowest I. Q. Accepted	Desirable I. Q.
Company Test	8	9 or 10
Benge's Test of General Knowledge	56 percentile	Anything Above 56
Life Office Management Association Test	90	100 to 110

The seventh question, "Are clerical aptitude tests administered?", indicated that of the 15 concerns interviewed, 10, or 2/3, did not administer them, and 5, or 1/3 did employ different methods.

TABLE VI

Replies to the Question:

Are Clerical Aptitude Tests Administered?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
No	10	67
Yes	5	33
Total	15	100

The answers to questions 8 and 9 are summarized in Table VII. The questions were: "What type of clerical aptitude test is given? How much weight is placed upon the results of a clerical test?" Of the 5 concerns reporting the use of a clerical aptitude test, 2 indicated that the test results were decisive in the selection of their personnel; 1 used it only as a guide in its selection; 1 accepted a fair score; and the last had adopted its test too recently to draw any definite conclusions. It is significant to note that each of the 5 concerns employed a different clerical aptitude test.

TABLE VII

Replies to the Questions:

What Type of Clerical Aptitude Test Is Given? How Much Weight Is Placed Upon the Results of a Clerical Aptitude Test?

Name of Clerical Aptitude Test	Weight Placed Upon Results
Clerical Adptability Test	Fair Score
Company Test, based upon ability in arithmetic	Decisive
Benge's Clerical Test D	Decisive
Survey of Working Speed and Accuracy	Undecided
Minnesota Clerical Test for Filing	Serves as guide

The replies to the 10th question, "By whom are these intelligence and clerical aptitude tests administered and the test results interpreted?", are given in Table VIII. Of the 8 concerns using either or both the I. Q. and clerical ability tests, 4 administered both; 3 gave only the I. Q. tests; and 1 used only the clerical aptitude tests. The replies to question 10 indicate that 3 personnel managers or assistants conducted and corrected the tests; 3 companies employed special test administrators to carry on this work; and 2 heads of stenographic or transcribing divisions were responsible for this work.

TABLE VIII

Replies to the Question:

By Whom Are These Intelligence and Clerical Aptitude Tests Administered and the Test Results Interpreted?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Personnel Managers or Assistants	3	37.5
Test Administrators	3	37.5
Heads of Stenographic or Transcribing Divisions	2	25
Total	8	100

It was discovered in tabulating the replies to question 11, "Are norms accompanying tests acceptable, or have office norms been established?", that of the 8 concerns administering either or both the I. Q. and clerical ability tests, 4 used for scoring the test norms accompanying the tests, while 3 set up their own scoring standards, and 1 was undecided.

TABLE IX

Replies to the Question:

Are Norms Accompanying Tests Acceptable, or Have Office Norms Been Established?

Unedited Replies from Interview	Number of Replies	Per cent
Accept test norms	4	50
Accept office norms	3	37.5
Undecided	1	12.5
Total	8	100

Question 12 brought to light a variety of interesting replies. The question asked: "To what extent is age considered in the selection of employees?" Three of the 15 concerns replying reported that there was not any limit. Two more reported that 35 years was the limit, one of them adding that older personnel were often too set in their ways to adjust themselves readily to new situations. The other replies depending upon individual office situations are listed as follows:

1. Lowest limit 17 to 18 years; highest 25 to 27 years.

2. Girls of ages 21 to 30 are likely to be married; therefore, we don't hesitate to employ female help 31 to 40 provided they show no physical disability.

3. Ages 18 to 20, since we accept only graduates from business colleges.

4. Age of high school graduates.

5. Choice of a stenographer often depends upon age of other girls on the office force.

6. Nobody over 30 is hired.

7. Average age is 17 to 18.

8. Acceptable age ranges from 17 to 30. There are exceptions made according to type of work being done.

Each of the 15 concerns interviewed was asked, "Is preference given to applicants with business or collegiate backgrounds over those with high school training only?" The replies indicated that 8, or 53%, preferred business training beyond that given in the high school, and 7, or 47%, accepted those with high school business training only. These data are sum-

marized in Table X.

The following are unedited comments from the interviews expressing reasons for the choice of office personnel with business college or collegiate background.

1. High school graduates are never considered because they do not qualify.

2. Very few high school graduates can qualify for stenographic work.

3. We need a college graduate with a good English background and a sound general knowledge.

4. We feel that an added year of training in a business school is necessary to finish them off.

5. The average girl right out of high school is not equipped for a stenographic position.

The following are unedited comments from the questionnaire given by those interviewed expressing reasons for the choice of office personnel with high school background.

1. We prefer high school graduates with little experience who can be developed.

2. We take 50 or 60 high school graduates into our concern every June. There is a pronounced promotional policy within our firm.

3. A good high school graduate is most acceptable.

Tables XI and XII show the replies to question 14, "Are typewriting tests administered for applicants for typing positions? By Whom?" Of the 15 concerns replying, 6, or, 40%, answered No and 9, or 60%, answered Yes. Of the 9 answering in the affirmative, 3 tests were conducted by special test adminis-

trators; 2 were conducted by personnel managers; 2 by office managers; and 2 by heads of departments.

TABLE X

Replies to the Question:

Is Preference Given to Applicants with Business College or Collegiate Backgrounds over Those with High School Training?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Yes	8	53
No	7	47
Total	15	100

TABLE XI

Replies to the Question:

Are Typewriting Tests Administered for Applicants for Typist Positions?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Yes	9	60
No	6	40
Total	15	100

trators; 2 were conducted by personnel managers; 2 by office managers; and 2 by heads of departments.

TABLE X

Replies to the Question:

Is Preference Given to Applicants with Business College or Collegiate Backgrounds over Those with High School Training?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Yes	3	53
No	7	47
Total	15	100

TABLE XI

Replies to the Question:

Are Typewriting Tests Administered for Applicants for Typist Positions?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Yes	9	60
No	6	40
Total	15	100

TABLE XII

Replies to the Question:

By Whom Are Typewriting Tests Administered?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Test Administrators	3	33.4
Personnel Managers	2	22.2
Office Managers	2	22.2
Heads of Departments	2	22.2
Total	9	100

In answer to question 15, "What type of test is given, straight-copy or office-job material?", it was learned that of the 9 concerns administering a typewriting test, 6, or 66.7%, used straight-copy material and 3, or 33.3%, used office-job material.

Three of the concerns employing straight-copy material for testing used prescribed tests made available by Life Office Management Association, Typewriting Corporation, Benge Typing Test; and the three remaining used special tests made up for the company's exclusive use. Of the 3 concerns using office-job material, 2 included tests based on the documents and forms peculiar to their business. The third required copy of a manuscript from rough draft.

TABLE XII

Replies to the Question:

By Whom Are Typewriting Tests Administered?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Test Administrators	5	55.6
Personnel Managers	2	22.2
Office Managers	2	22.2
Heads of Departments	2	22.2
Total	9	100

TABLE XIII

Replies to the Question:

What Type of Test Is Given, Straight-copy or Office-job Material?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Straight-copy Material	6	66.7
Office-job Material	3	33.3
Total	9	100

Question 16 asked: "Is practice at the typewriter permitted before testing?" It is significant to note that 7 of the 9 concerns replying, or 77.8%, answered Yes, and that the 2, or 22.2%, answering No did not place any time limit on the test and required no special speed proficiency.

TABLE XIV

Replies to the Question:

Is Practice at the Typewriter Permitted Before Testing?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Yes	7	77.8
No	2	22.2
Total	9	100

TABLE XIII

Replies to the Question:

What Type of Test Is Given,
Straight-copy or Office-job Material?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Straight-copy Material	6	66.7
Office-job Material	3	33.3
Total	9	100

Question Is asked: "Is practice at the typewriter permitted before testing?" It is significant to note that 7 of the 9 concerns replying, or 77.8%, answered Yes, and that the 2, or 22.2%, answering No did not place any time limit on the test and required no special speed proficiency.

TABLE XIV

Replies to the Question:

Is Practice at the Typewriter Permitted Before Testing?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Yes	7	77.8
No	2	22.2
Total	9	100

The 7 concerns allowing practice time at the typewriter recognized the need for orientation at the machine in order to obtain the best results. The following are some of the unedited comments made by those interviewed when replying to this question :

1. Very definitely; we even permit choice of a machine.

2. Yes; we accepted the suggestion of one of our secretaries to do so.

3. We permit as much as an hour's practice on the actual test, if desired.

In answer to question 17, "What is the total testing time allotted?", it was noted that the range in time allowance varied considerably. Of the 9 concerns replying to this question, 3 stated that no time was specified; 2 allowed 10 minutes; 2 permitted sufficient time to complete the work; 1 allowed 5 minutes; 1 allowed 15 minutes.

TABLE XV

Replies to the Question:

What Is the Total Testing Time Allotted at the Typewriter?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Time unspecified	3	33.4
Sufficient to Complete Work	2	22.2
15 minutes	1	11.1
10 minutes	2	22.2
5 minutes	1	11.1
Total	9	100

The 7 concerns allowing practice time at the typewriters recognized the need for orientation at the machine in order to obtain the best results. The following are some of the unedited comments made by those interviewed when replying to this question :

1. Very definitely; we even permit choice of a machine.

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Replies to the Question:

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	Number of Replies	Per cent
Time unspecified	3	33.4
Sufficient to Complete Work	2	22.2
15 minutes	1	11.1
10 minutes	2	22.2
5 minutes	1	11.1
Total	9	100

Table XVI shows that in reply to the question, "Are specific directions given for arrangement of work?", 6 of the 9 concerns replying, or 66.7%, answered No and 3, or 33.3%, answered Yes. It was felt by the 6 concerns that much could be learned of the applicant's ability to set up material without any specific directions. On the other hand, the 3 remaining concerns felt it was essential to learn of the applicant's ability to read and follow directions.

TABLE XVI

Replies to the Question:

Are Specific Directions Given for Arrangement of Work?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
No	6	66.7
Yes	3	33.3
Total	9	100

Question 19, "How is test graded?", brought to light a variety of different replies depending upon the needs of the individual concerns. Three of the 9 concerns administering typewriting tests replied:

> Material is checked for general setup, evenness of margins, evenness of touch, and neat erasures.

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TABLE XVI

Replies to the Question:

Are Specific Directions Given for Arrangement of Work?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
No	6	66.7
Yes	3	33.3
Total	9	100

Question 19, "How is best graded?", brought to light a variety of different replies depending upon the needs of the individual concerns. Three of the 9 concerns administering typewriting tests replied:

Material is graded for general setup, evenness of margins, evenness of touch, and neat erasures.

The remaining 6 concerns replied as follows:

1. Standard scoring procedures.

2. Accuracy in following directions and in proof-reading.

3. Accuracy in following directions and accuracy in correction of misspelled words found in type-writing test.

4. Accuracy and ability to follow directions.

5. Just interested in whether applicant knows touch typewriting.

6. Speed and accuracy.

Table XVII shows the replies to the second half of question 19, "By whom are the typewriting tests corrected?" In 3 of the 9 concerns special test administrators corrected tests. In 2 personnel managers corrected tests; in 2 others office managers graded the test results; and in the last 2 the heads of the departments hiring the typist did the grading.

TABLE XVII

Replies to the Question:

By Whom Are the Typewriting Tests Corrected?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Test Administrators	3	33.4
Personnel Managers	2	22.2
Office Managers	2	22.2
Heads of Departments	2	22.2
Total	9	100

Table XVIII shows the relationship of the replies to questions 20 and 21: "What is the degree of accuracy sought? What speed proficiency is sought?" It is significant to note the attitudes of the concerns relative to accuracy and speed requirements. Accuracy was preferred to speed of typewriting, 6 of the 9 concerns replying, or 66.7%, "Highest accuracy possible." One concern accepted 5 errors; another used the norms established by Life Office Management Association. The last reporting felt that accuracy was not important in a test because of the nervousness on the part of the applicant.

In regard to speed proficiency a wide divergence of opinion was noted: 4 set up a special speed rate ranging from 45 net words a minute to 60 net words a minute; 2 depended upon estimating how fast typewriting sounded; 1 used norms established by Life Office Management Association; 1 considered no special rate; 1 preferred speed potentiality to speed proficiency. It is significant to note that those interviewed were not averse to high speed rates but in the past had been unable to obtain a combination of both accuracy and speed and consequently preferred accuracy to just speed alone.

In question 22 the inquiry was made, "Are dictation tests administered for stenographic and secretarial positions?" Of the 15 concerns interviewed, 10, or 2/3, answered Yes, and 5, or 1/3, answered No.

TABLE XVIII

Replies to the Questions:

What Is Degree of Accuracy Sought?
What Speed Proficiency Is Sought?

Degree of Accuracy Sought	Speed Proficiency Sought
Highest possible	Estimation of sound*
5 errors not considered important	45 - 55 nwam[1]
Norms established by LOMA	Norms established by LOMA[2]
Highest possible	None in particular
Highest possible	Speed potentiality preferred to speed proficiency
Highest possible	45 nwam
Not important in test	Estimation of sound
Highest possible	60 nwam
Highest possible	50 nwam

[1] Net words a minute

[2] Life Office Management Association

* See Appendix B

TABLE XIX

Replies to the Question:

Are Dictation Tests Administered for Stenographic and Secretarial Positions?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Yes	10	66.7
No	5	33.3
Total	15	100

Tables XX and XXI show the replies to question 23, "What type of material is dictated? By Whom?" It is significant to note that of the 10 concerns administering dictation tests, 9, or 90%, dictated business letters; the other concern used anything at hand, such as a newspaper.

TABLE XX

Replies to the Question:
What Type of Material Is Dictated?

Unedited Replies from Interview	Number of Replies	Per cent
Letters	9	90
Anything at hand	1	10
Total	10	100

TABLE XXI

Replies to the Question:

By Whom Are the Dictation Tests Administered?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Office Managers	4	40
Personnel Managers	3	30
Heads of Departments	2	20
Test Administrators	1	10
Total	10	100

The above table indicates that of the 10 concerns employing dictation tests, 4 are dictated by office managers; 3 by personnel managers; 2 by heads of departments; 1 by a test administrator.

Question 24, "Is directed practice offered prior to the testing?", disclosed the fact that only 1 of the 10 concerns administering dictation tests gave any practice at all, the 9 remaining, none whatever.

TABLE XXII

Replies to the Question:

Is Directed Practice Offered Prior to the Testing?

Unedited Replies from Interview	Number of Replies	Per cent
No	9	90
Enough to put applicant at ease	1	10
Total	10	100

Table XXIII shows replies to question 25, "Are specific directions given for arrangement of letters?" Of the 10 concerns replying, 8, or 80%, answered No, and 2, or 20%, answered Yes. Both of those replying in the affirmative gave a manual of instructions to the applicant containing office regulations for letter setup. The applicant's ability to follow the instructions was considered in the rating of his work.

TABLE XXIII

Replies to the Question:

Are Specific Directions Given for Arrangement of Letters?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
No	8	80
Yes	2	20
Total	10	100

Question 26 asks, "How many letters are dictated and what is their approximate length?" Table XX showed that 9 of the 10 concerns used business correspondence. The following table shows the number of letters dictated by the 9 concerns and their approximate length.

TABLE XXIV

Replies to the Question:

How Many Letters Are Dictated
and What Is Their Approximate Length?

Number of Letters Dictated	Approximate Length	
Indefinite	- - - -	
1*	60- 75	words
3*	65-150-125	"
1	150-175	"
2	100-130	"
1	150-160	"
1*	175-200	"
1*	110	"
2 or 3	150-175	"

*See Appendix C

Table XXV shows the correlation among the replies to questions 27, 28, and 29. "Is the material dictated at an even rate of speed, timed by a stopwatch? Has the test administrator had special instruction in the timing of dictation tests? Is material dictated office-style?"

Of the 10 concerns replying, 9, or 90%, answered No to question 27, No to question 28, and Yes to question 29. The firm that used a stopwatch to time its dictation accurately, answered Yes to question 27, Yes to question 28, and No to question 29.

TABLE XXIV

Replies to the Question:

How Many Letters Are Dictated
and What Is Their Approximate Length?

Number of Letters Dictated	Approximate Length
Indefinite	- - - -
1*	80- 75 words
3	55-150-125 "
1	150-175 "
2	100-130 "
1	150-180 "
1	175-200 "
1*	110 "
2 or 3	150-175 "

*See Appendix C

Table XXV shows the correlation among the replies to questions 27, 28, and 29. "Is the material dictated at an even rate of speed, timed by a stopwatch? Has the test administrator had special instruction in the timing of dictation tests? Is material dictated office-style?"

Of the 10 concerns replying, 9, or 90%, answered No to question 27, No to question 28, and Yes to question 29. The firm that used a stopwatch to time its dictation accurately, answered Yes to question 27, Yes to question 28, and No to question 29.

TABLE XXV

Replies to the Questions:

Is Material Dictated Office Style?

Has the Test Administrator Had Special Instruction in the Timing of Dictation Tests?

Is the Material Dictated at an Even Rate of Speed, Timed by a Stopwatch?

Timed Dictation	Test Administrator Instructed in Timing	Dictation Office-style	Number of Replies	Per cent
No	No	Yes	9	90
Yes	Yes	No	1	10
Total			10	100

Each person interviewed was asked, "Are repetitions in dictation permitted?" The replies are as follows: 7 of the 10 concerns replied Yes; 2 replied No; and 1 answered, "It usually isn't necessary."

TABLE XXVI

Replies to the Question:
Are Repetitions in Dictation Permitted?

Unedited Replies from Interviews	Number of Replies	Per cent
Yes	7	70
No	2	20
It usually isn't necessary.	1	10
Total	10	100

In answer to question 31, "How much time is allotted for transcription?", it was learned that 9 of the 10 concerns, or 90%, allow ample time to complete the transcript, only 1 stating any specified amount of time which had proved sufficient for the transcription of the test letter used.

The following unedited comments of those interviewed were recorded in regard to this question:

1. Five to 8 minutes.
2. Judgment timing based on experience.
3. Enough.
4. The applicant is timed and then rated according to a table.
5. As much time as is needed.
6. Reasonable amount.
7. Sufficient time to complete the test.
8. Ample time to complete a letter.
9. Sufficient time to make a good-looking letter, but time spent in its completion is an important factor since much of office work is done under pressure.
10. Not specified, but we do make note of the length of time the applicant takes.

Question 32 asked, "How is test graded? By Whom?" It was noted that the majority of persons interviewed required reasonable accuracy of transcription, attractiveness of set-up, and neatness in general appearance.

Their replies were recorded as follows:

1. Reasonable accuracy.

2. Accuracy and neatness.

3. No specific penalties.

4. Neatness; attractive arrangement; evenness of touch; correct transcription of book titles and chapter titles.

5. Evenness of touch; accuracy of transcription; spelling; punctuation which is dictated.

6. Good typing and attractive setup.

7. General appearance; evenness of margins; good erasing.

8. First copy is the one graded; evenness of touch and attractive setup.

9. Just read over for meaning.

10. Accuracy of transcription; neatness; following directions.

Table XXVII summarizes the replies to the second half of the above question, "By whom are the tests graded?" It was noted that 4 were office managers; 3 were personnel managers; 2 were heads of departments; 1 was a test administrator.

TABLE XXVII

Replies to the Question:
By Whom Are the Tests Graded?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Office Managers	4	40
Personnel Managers	3	30
Heads of Departments	2	20
Test Administrators	1	10
Total	~~10~~	~~100~~

In order to summarize the data of questions 33 and 34, Tables XXVIII and XIX were prepared. The questions were: "Is verbatim transcription necessary? Are deviations from original dictation permissible, provided basic meaning is retained?" In replying to these questions, 8, or 80%, of the concerns answered that they did not require a verbatim transcript, accepting substitutions that were reasonable and showed good judgment. The 2 remaining, or 20%, specified that verbatim transcriptions were necessary only on a test; one indicated that questions could be asked by applicant at the time the test letter was dictated.

TABLE XXVIII

Replies to the Question:

Is Verbatim Transcription Necessary?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
No	8	80
Yes	2	20
Total	10	100

TABLE XXIX

Replies to the Question:

Are Deviations from Original Dictation Permissible, Provided Basic Meaning Is Retained?

	Number of Replies	Per cent
Yes	8	80
No	2	20
Total	10	100

The concluding question, "Are materials for tests of typist and stenographer supplied by firm?" was asked to discover if applicants needed to take with them any of the equipment essential to their work. It was learned that all the concerns interviewed supplied the necessary materials.

The data of this study were collected by means of interviews in preference to questionnaires since it was felt that the persons interviewed would be inclined to express themselves more freely in an informal discussion. Their unedited comments relative to testing in general and criticism of school preparation are listed below as recorded. Each statement represents the opinion of one individual unless otherwise indicated.

TESTING:

During the war, our testing procedures were eliminated, but all those hired without them have since been replaced. We have raised our standards again now that more help is available.

Two personnel managers said that they would accept without further testing any one who had passed satisfactorily the National Clerical Ability Tests and expressed the wish that more schools used them.

An applicant can determine from our testing practices what kind of position she is applying for and whether she is going to be able to adjust herself to it.

We make every possible allowance for nervousness and test all applicants during the lunch hour so that few will be in the office watching them.

SCHOOL PREPARATION:

Quality of stenographers is poor nowadays. They possess no grammar or word sense. Even college graduates lack the essential fundamental knowledges.

Proofreading ability is very necessary. Students should receive more training in it.

Margins as a rule are bad and spacing of letters poor. They don't proofread. Schools lack practical training.

Many don't know how to follow directions.

Students need more training on:

Typing of statements
Typing of stencils
Use of Electromatic Typewriter

Business schools should raise their standards if they want their graduates employed. They should be more practical about the type of student they choose, selecting only the best high school graduates. They should do less training in stenography and more in typing and clerical training.

Chapter V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Chapter I, page 1, the 3 major purposes of this study were outlined. In concluding this study, it is important to take up these purposes again in order to review previous observations and summarize the findings in the light of these objectives.

DETERMINATION OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING PROCEDURES IN MUNICIPAL BOSTON:

In Chapter II reference was made to a special survey conducted in the New England Area by the Office Management Association in 1935. It was the purpose of this survey to obtain from employers in this district all possible information concerning the testing practices which were in use. Their findings disclosed that most offices in this area have no definite testing program beyond the dictation of several short letters to the applicant to be transcribed immediately.[1]

This study was limited to 15 business establishments in Municipal Boston. It was discovered that there were no specified testing procedures among these concerns. Only 3 concerns made any attempt of testing their applicants thoroughly.

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[1]Joint Committee Report, Present School Practices in Vocational Ability Testing. Tenth Yearbook, Eastern Commercial Teachers Association, 1937. p. 142.

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Chapter V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The other 12 gave a short dictation or typing test and relied on the recommendations from schools or previous employers for the other pertinent information about the applicants. It was disclosed that the interview itself and the personal appearance of the applicants also played an important role in the hiring procedures.

NEED FOR STANDARDIZATION OF TESTING PROCEDURES:

In Chapter II the purposes of the National Clerical Ability tests were listed. Item No. 4 reads as follows:[1]

> To provide employers of office help with a better means of appraising the qualifications for clerical positions, and to provide a certification plan which will, to some extent, obviate the necessity of giving employment tests to applicants who have graduated from public and private business schools.

It was felt by 2 personnel managers that National Clerical Ability tests might well be used in the schools as one means of standardization of testing procedures. It was further expressed that those who passed these tests successfully, possessing desirable personalities and appearance, be hired without further testing in the offices in which they were applying for a position.

It is significant to note that interviewers were anxious to discover if their own testing practices paralleled those of other Boston concerns. Only one personnel manager felt

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[1]Joint Committee Report op. cit., p. 16.

that any attempts at standardization would be futile in view of the different types of businesses conducted which would entail the use of testing methods pertaining only to their particular business.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CO-OPERATION OF BUSINESS AND SCHOOLS IN PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING:

The following recommendations have been made as a result of securing these data:

1. Both business and schools should investigate the possibilities of adopting the National Clerical Ability Tests thus attaining standardization of preparation of stenographers and typists on the part of the schools, and thus attaining standardization of testing practices on the part of business.

2. In view of the fact that intelligence tests were administered as part of the testing practices in many concerns and that in some cases much weight was placed on the results of these tests, teachers of business subjects should guide their students in the acquisition of general knowledge as well as technical skill.

3. Since 77.8% of those administering tests permitted warm-up practice at the typewriter before testing, students should be trained to daily drills at the typewriter before beginning their work.

4. In view of the fact that 66.7% of the concerns administering typewriting tests used straight-copy material and 33.3% used office-job material, emphasis should be placed

on straight-copy work.

5. Both accuracy and speed in typewriting ability should be developed with emphasis placed on accuracy since it was disclosed that the highest possible accuracy was preferred to speed proficiency. It is significant to note that those interviewed were not averse to high speed rates but in the past had been unable to obtain a combination of both accuracy and speed and consequently preferred accuracy to just speed alone.

6. Since 90% of the concerns administering shorthand tests, dictated 1 to 3 letters ranging in average length from 100 to 200 words, schools should also use business letters of corresponding number and length.

7. In view of the fact that 90% of the concerns administering shorthand tests dictated their letters office-style and 90% of the concerns did not give any directed practice before dictation of test, practice should be given in the classroom in this type of dictation timed not by a stopwatch but at approximate rates of speed.

8. Since 80% of the concerns did not give specific directions for letter setup but graded the applicant on his ability to transcribe an attractively arranged letter, very definite practice should be given on correct letter placement.

9. Since employers allowed an average amount of time to transcribe a letter, students should be trained to meet an above-average production rate, thus allowing for nervousness

at the time of testing.

10. In view of the fact that 80% of the concerns did not require verbatim transcripts but allowed reasonable deviations, the student should be given training in the use of good judgment in the transcription of his notes.

11. Since accuracy in proofreading is so very important in both typewriting and transcription work, great emphasis should be placed on this training.

12. Since grammar, word sense, and spelling are vital to the success of any stenographer and since employers complained of a weakness in these fundamentals, the utmost effort should be expended in the classroom on these issues.

13. Since business establishments rate schools on the preparedness of applicants sent to them for positions, the greatest care should be taken by the schools in the training of their students.

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APPENDIX A

THE 15 SELECTED BOSTON CONCERNS ON WHICH THE THESIS STATISTICS ARE BASED

NAME OF CONCERN	LOCATION
American Mutual Liability Insurance Company	142 Berkeley Street
Bemis Bros. Bag Company	40 Central Street
Dun & Bradstreet, Inc.	6 St. James Avenue
Eastern Gas & Fuel Associates	250 Stuart Street
Houghton Mifflin Company	2 Park Street
John Hancock Life Insurance Company	197 Clarendon Street
Liberty Mutual Insurance Company	175 Berkeley Street
Massachusetts Bonding & Insurance Co.	10 Post Office Square
New England Power Company	441 Stuart Street
New England Transportation Company	South Station
New York, New Haven & Hartford R. R. Co.	South Station
Procter and Gamble Distributing Company	40 Central Street
Salada Tea Company	155 Berkeley Street
United Fruit Company	1 Federal Street
United Shoe Machinery Corporation	140 Federal Street

APPENDIX B

EXPLANATION OF DATA OF TABLES III and XVIII

TABLE III:

This concern made a complete change in its testing practices in the spring of 1948 because they were not satisfied with the results from the previous methods used. Consequently they were unable to give any specific data in some of their test results.

TABLE XVIII:

Estimation of sound was explained as follows: By standing away from the applicant and listening to the sound of his work at the typewriter, his approximate speed rate was estimated.

This concern allowed as much as an hour's practice on the actual test if desired; therefore, a high accuracy and speed rate were expected.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLES OF 4 LETTERS DICTATED AS TEST MATERIAL

LETTER I

Mr. Richard Green
159 Steven Street
Lowell, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Green:

Thank you very much for placing your automobile insurance with us. Before sending the enclosed certified registration to the Registry of Motor Vehicles please complete any spaces that may be checked. Your registration fee is $5.00. Your policy will be sent to you soon.

In the meantime, if we can be of additional service to you, please let us know.

Very truly yours,

LETTER II

Mr. Ralph C. Street
American Chemical Company
1082 High Street
St. Louis, Missouri

Dear Mr. Street:

You recently advised us of Mr. Robert F. Jones' intention to present a claim under the group coverage carried by your company. On reviewing our files under this date, we find that the claim blanks have not been received at this office, and we are wondering whether or not the disability was of sufficient duration to entitle the employee to benefits. We

are calling this to your attention because under the terms of the contract employees may lose their rights to recover if the proofs of the claim are not filed within the proper period of time as required by the policy.

In order that the best interests of all concerned may be protected, we would appreciate your advising us of the status of this employee's claim as you understand it. If we can be of help in any way, please advise us.

Very truly yours,

LETTER III

Martin A. Harrison Company
2767 Industrial Street
San Francisco, California

Gentlemen:

To permit a prompt interim adjustment of your insurance costs and also to avoid interruption in your office routine which might be caused by our auditor's call, we suggest that you complete the attached payroll report at your earliest convenience and return it to us in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

To assure accurate reporting of payrolls and correct classification assignment, we have enclosed an instruction sheet which outlines the manner of reporting overtime payrolls, executive officers' payroll and the rules covering the division of a single employee's earnings. Additional instructions that are applicable to your coverage have been checked. The report form has been furnished in duplicate. Retention of the copy will make it easier for you to check our adjustment.

Very truly yours,

LETTER IV

Mr. John Jones
26 Church Street
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Sir:

I believe all of us are of one mind as to the benefits to be derived from close contact with our line representatives, and I am more than ordinarily impressed with this belief through my interviews with our agents.

They are glad and willing to unfold verbally things that they carry in mind but hesitate to write about although, in each instance, I urge that there should be no hesitancy in writing to headquarters.

We are always glad to give careful consideration to any subject involving our welfare, for, after all, it is one company and our aim is to place the service on the highest standard.

Yours truly,

LETTER IV

Mr. John Jones
29 Church Street
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Sir:

I believe all of us are of one mind as to the benefits to be derived from close contact with our line representative, and I am more than ordinarily impressed with this belief through my interviews with our agents.

They are glad and willing to unfold verbally things that they carry in mind but hesitate to write about although, in each instance, I urge that there should be no hesitancy in writing to headquarters.

We are always glad to give careful consideration to any subject involving our welfare, for, after all, it is one company and our aim is to place the service on the highest standard.

Yours truly,

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